601

Step-mother	keibo
Step-father	keifu
Adopted son	yōshi
Adopted daughter	yōjo
Illegitimate child	shiseiji
Person living with a family but not a relative	dōkyonin

Descent is reckoned through the male line. Normally the first son succeeds to the headship of the house, and this is actually true in the great majority of cases, although the failure of the first or later sons to survive to maturity, or the death of sons in the war, have resulted in many household headships being held by sons other than the first, or by daughters. This is brought out in the following table which shows the relationship of the present head of the household to the preceding head. 611 592

592

Relationships may be obscured to simple observation because the head of the household (koshu) may reside in a foreign country. This was a common occurrence before the war during the widespread Okinawan emigration, but repatriation since the war has reduced the number of heads of households who live in foreign countries. At present most absentee heads live in Peru, Brasil, or in Argentina. In the absence or disability of the first son, the second and succeeding sons assume his place, not legally, but in practice, and should the elder son return, his younger brother would relinquish the headship and establish a branch family. The family register, however, is not changed to show the temporary head. But his absence may be indicated by a notation. [167]

592 562

A woman, either a wife or a daughter, is not considered in the succession if there are eligible male heirs, but in their absence, she may succeed to a house. The war produced many instances of this. A mother with minor children is the head of the house and has disposition of the family property, but custom and usage circumscribe her freedom of action. In custom, a mother with minor children, especially if one of them is a boy, is regarded as the trustee and caretaker of a house and its fields during the minority of her children, the eldest of whom, if he is a son, will become head when he reaches maturity. In practice, widows with minor sons do not sell or dispose of their property except under strong economic compulsions, and then only after discussion with representatives of the extended family.

592 [591]

The real place of the woman in the family system is to become part of the family of her husband. If she marries a first son, she enters the home of her husband's parents. If she marries a second or a third son, she is part of a branch family established by her husband. There is general agreement among Okinawans with whom I consulted that the residence of a young wife with the husband's family does not result in the prolonged quarreling and bickering which have made the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law relationship so legendary a topic in Chinese and Japanese society. Disagreements exist, but according to residents in [606]

[Text continues top of p. 95--analyst]

each of the villages, they seldom reach real intensity or a point where the husband sends his wife back to her parents and obtains a divorce. 592 606

A special problem, ordinarily calling for adoption as the solution, is the situation in a family with no sons. During the child bearing ages a family tries very hard to get a son. The man with a family of daughters will resort to adoption of a male child of a relative, if at the end of a child bearing period, no sons have been born to him. But adoption, while available as a device for insuring the continuity of the family, is uncommon and does not have the importance historically attached to it in Japan. Adoption is discussed in more detail in Section 6. 597 [842]

3

The Extended Family and its Branches

The extended family (ichimon in Japanese, munchu in Okinawan) consists of all families in the main and collateral line of descent from the common ancestor.[2] This ancestor, who founded the house, is an historical, or at least a supposed historical person. The descendants of the founder of the family, themselves united in a family group, are thus related to one another, though the older the family, the more remote these relationships become. Many villagers recognize that they are related to one another, but the relationships are seldom clearly defined beyond the second cousin. After this people become relatives, (shinseki or shinrui in Japanese). These words, used synonymously in Okinawa, indicate an awareness of a relationship without knowing offhand its exact nature. This problem is solved in part, as will appear later on, in Section 8, by knowing the household order name of each family, but even here individual relationships are difficult to trace. 614 596 607

Contemporary lack of precise knowledge of family genealogies is due in large part to the destruction of many family records during the war. The keeping of genealogies was common, especially among the families who belonged to the old Okinawan nobility. The genealogies lost in the war are irreplaceable. The same is true of the official family registers which were also destroyed. They were replaced with ones prepared by officials personally interviewing the families involved. While this procedure succeeded in recording contemporary data with a fair degree of accuracy, it could not duplicate the minute details, going back for generations, which were recorded in the old registers. 601 219 [565]

2 Dictionaries usually define ichimon as clan, but I have avoided using this term because of ambiguities in usuage. In American practice, clan has been applied to groups in which descent is reckoned through the mother. See R. H. Lowie, Primitive society, New York, 1920, 111-12. Father-sibs (Lowie's term) or family groups could be used, but the latter term suggests more a collection of families than a large unified family with many sub-families.

[Koohinda-son]

The husband sought military employment after the divorce. Haru has now also gone to the city to find military employment because her younger brother, who is household head, became angry and said, "...even the animals know enough to suckle their young." An observer commented, "Haru is mentally deficient, so that is why she was jealous." 586 159

Case 2

Kanā at the age of 32 was Chūsei's third wife, and he was her fourth husband. His seventy-year-old mother, Ushii, had become blind as a result of the war. Kanā insulted her mother-in-law somehow. In turn Ushii insulted Kanā by saying she couldn't work very hard. Chūsei divorced Kanā for the quarrel, and she moved to an offshore island. More recently she remarried to a man two villages away, and they have two children. Her new husband fishes during the summer and works for a big sugar mill during the winter.

Case 3

The husband, Jirō, was a second son of 23 years, who had become an adopted husband, or 'yōshi'. His wife Yae, who was a common law child, bore him a son. Because he violently disliked farming he sold the land he inherited and bought a mat-making shop in Naha. His real father, killed in the war, had operated such a business. Jirō also took up a concubine in Naha.

Though she had borne Jirō a son, Yae divorced him because she didn't like the idea of a concubine, and preferred farming to life in Naha. Later Jirō sold the houselot in the village, took the house apart and reassembled it in Naha. The mat shop failed after one year. He now plans to make his living by doing nothing but renting out rooms. He married his concubine eighteen months later, after she bore him a son. Yae married a few days after the divorce, to a man from a neighboring village. She now has two sons.

Diagnosis In the first case cited above, we can see several factors that help us to understand Okinawan society. Attitudes expressed include: [593]

a) A wife should not be jealous of her husband's attention to other women;
b) A brother need not support his sister if she refuses to care for her own child; and
c) A mother's first duty is to care for her own child.

Both divorced persons eventually sought military employment. So we see that urbanization is not alone a matter of pull from the city, but contains in addition an element of being "pushed from the village". [369]

The Chūsei-Kanā divorce was brought on by an insult to the husband's mother. In Okinawa as in Japan the mother-in-law wields a good deal of authority. [606] [171]

In the third case cited, it was found that Jirō had a very bad reputation in the village because he was a 'yōshi' who sold his inherited [829]